

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery

Minister for Trade

Minister for Business Precincts

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Racing



Friday, 10 June 2022

VICTORIA'S FINEST OFF TO BIRMINGHAM GAMES

Almost 40 Victorians have been confirmed to compete at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games next month, with the Andrews Labor Government backing our top athletes through the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS).

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today announced 32 athletes and seven para-athletes from the VIS have been selected to represent Australia at the Games. Further selections will occur in coming weeks and around 70 Victorians are expected to make the trip to Birmingham.

The confirmed selections include Gronya Somerville who will be competing in badminton at her third Commonwealth Games. She is also a champion of the Dutch and Canadian Opens.

Dual Olympian Katharina Haecker will be going for gold in judo, while Angela Yu will be carrying on a family tradition of competing in badminton – her mother He Tian Tang won bronze at the 2010 Games in Delhi.

Echuca young gun Col Pearse is also looking to make a statement in Birmingham, after winning bronze in the men's 100 metre butterfly S10 event at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.

The athletes will be joined by eight VIS staff who have been selected to key roles including Physiotherapy Manager Steve Hawkins who has been appointed Head Physiotherapist for the Australian team.

The Labor Government more than doubled its contribution to the VIS in the *2021/22 Budget* to significantly expand operations and nurture our next generation of sporting stars, bringing the total funding to \$44.6 million over three years.

This has enabled the Institute to support more than 130 athletes prepare for a shot at selection to the Birmingham Games, and now to follow their dream to represent their country at the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games and Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games.

At the Gold Coast four years ago, Australia led the medal tally with 80 gold, 59 silver and 59 bronze. Of those, VIS athletes won 11 gold, 12 silver, and 10 bronze medals.

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games start on 28 July and will feature 24 sports and eight para-sports.

After that, regional Victoria will take centre stage as the host of the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Victoria 2026 will create a new multi-city model for the Commonwealth Games with four regional hubs established in Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Gippsland, each with their own athlete's village and sport program.

For details on all the athletes selected, go to vis.org.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

"We proudly back our world-class athletes through the Victorian Institute of Sport, which has a formidable reputation in bringing out the best in our local athletes."

"Hosting the Commonwealth Games in four years' time will deliver major benefits, particularly in the regions, and leave a lasting legacy for the growth and development of sport throughout Victoria."

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